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Chorlton
~~15. May 1875~~

ON THE CLASS

OF

RUDE STONE MONUMENTS

WHICH ARE COMMONLY CALLED IN
ENGLAND CROMLECHS, AND IN FRANCE DOLMENS, AND ARE
HERE SHOWN TO HAVE BEEN THE
SEPULCHRAL CHAMBERS OF ONCE-EXISTING MOUNDS.

PREVAILING ERRORS ON THE SUBJECT REFUTED
BY A CRITICAL EXAMINATION
OF THE MONUMENTS REFERRED TO BY THE
MAINTAINERS OF THESE ERRORS.

BY

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RIPON :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY JOHNSON AND CO., MARKET-PLACE.
LONDON : SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1875.



INTRODUCTION.

THE first of the three Articles here published appeared in “Nature,” on August 13, 1874, and an arrangement was made with the Editor of that Journal that its pages should contain the two succeeding portions of this Paper. But by a letter dated so long after as January 16, 1875, Mr. Keltie wrote in the Editor’s behalf that he had been “reluctantly compelled to postpone the two remaining articles for so long, that it was out of the question to publish them as a continuation of the first article ; and as he saw no hope of getting them in for a long time to come, he regretted very much to be compelled to cancel them.” I was welcome, he added, to publish the whole in any other journal.

This statement is made in the belief that it is necessary that the appearance in Pamphlet-form of a series of articles, the first of which has already been published in a periodical, should be accounted for.

Had I deemed the subject-matter of little importance, or only of passing interest, I should have quietly sub-

mitted to the verdict of the editor of "Nature," who has put aside the greater portion of my Paper, in order to make way for other matter of greater general interest to the readers of his publication. Holding, as I do, a firm conviction that an absolute necessity exists for pointing out to the archaeological student the true nature of the misty theories which, prettily garnished, and based upon what are stated to be facts, are confidently presented as contributions to scientific literature, I do not consider it right to withhold my views. I do not come forward as the enemy of any peculiar theorisers, but simply as the friend of those who hold that the chiefest object of scientific writers should be :—firstly, to obtain an accurate knowledge of the truth concerning the subjects of their study ; secondly, the dissemination of that truth when discovered.

I choose the Pamphlet-form from a desire to avoid running a second risk of having my articles cancelled, even after they have been accepted as suitable for the pages of a professed journal of science.

It is my object to give, in as concise a form as the importance of my subject will permit, the result of my enquiries into the nature and origin of those rude stone monuments, commonly called Cromlechs or Dolmens, which are now existent, or of which we have trustworthy record. In proceeding to this end I shall have to comment upon such writings of other archaeologists, or professed archaeologists, as may bear upon this subject. I shall, perforce, be compelled to expose much shallowness of reasoning, and much carelessness of description, which,

supplemented by a very imperfect knowledge, or too frequently by no knowledge, of many of the most important monuments, go far to develope in the practical observant student of such remains, a belief that the object of some writers is not the service of science in its purity and simplicity, but the enunciation of startling theories.

Too often is this fundamental maxim of all diligent pursuers of scientific study lost sight of, viz., that it is for the popular mind to be prepared gradually for the reception of the greater scientific truths, not for these truths to be distorted and glossed over until, by a process of denudation and re-dressing, they can be presented in a pleasant, though false form. By this latter process ignorance or prejudice is permitted to remain undisturbed by those who, while professing to be teachers of the truth, are often nurses of its greatest enemies.

Three errors respecting the Rude Stone Monuments under consideration are held, which it is my purpose herein to expose :—

1. The assertion that those structures, called Cromlechs or Dolmens, which are now partially, and in *very few instances* wholly exposed, were originally intended so to be.
2. The assertion that there is a specific class of monuments, to which the title of “Demi-Dolmens,” “Tripod” Dolmens, or “Earth-fast” Dolmens, has been given by modern writers.
3. The belief in the existence of exposed cromlechs or chambers upon the summits of artificial mounds.

In proceeding to refute the statements put forward

in support of the above erroneous theories, my guide will be my own practical experience,—the result of many years study under the very shadow of some of the chief European and Algerian monuments. These monuments I have carefully measured, and planned in the company of some well-known and well-informed archæologists, whose judgement and assistance have aided me greatly.

My sole object in the publication of this Pamphlet is to teach students what I know myself, and to invite the criticism of those who are better instructed than I am.

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ON THE CLASS OF RUDE STONE MONUMENTS WHICH ARE COMMONLY CALLED IN ENGLAND CROMLECHS AND IN FRANCE DOLMENS, AND ARE HERE SHOWN TO HAVE BEEN THE SEPULCHRAL CHAMBERS OF ONCE-EXISTING MOUNDS. PREVAILING ERRORS ON THE SUBJECT REFUTED BY A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE MONUMENTS REFERRED TO BY THE MAINTAINERS OF THESE ERRORS.

ARTICLE I.

THE object of the present and succeeding articles is to refute some of the opinions which are held by some of the leading antiquaries of the present day with respect to the construction, destination, and also antiquity of these monuments, and to show that, notwithstanding all the advantages presented by the establishment everywhere of Archaeological Societies, the publication of their Journals, and the increased facilities for travelling, some professed students of this branch of science are still found to be blindly adhering to the views of antiquaries of the past century. There is a very remarkable contrast between the progress made in the study of unchambered, and in that of chambered, barrows. A much sounder knowledge of the former exists than of the latter, not simply because the latter are more difficult to understand, but because their study requires qualifications not possessed by every investigator. He must have long acquaintance with the monuments, sufficient dexterity in drawing and surveying to make accurate plans, sections, and elevations, be a close and unbiased observer, and then have leisure to devote his intelligence to the scrutiny. Cursory examination will be always fatal to the acquisition of sound knowledge, and serve to mislead others; and it is greatly to be feared that this has been too common a habit and result.

The first erroneous opinion to which attention is now directed

is that very many of the Cromlechs or Dolmens (to employ terms which are in general use), *i. e.* rude stone structures which, in the British Islands and on the Continent, are partially, or in a few instances wholly, exposed to view, were never in any other condition ; that is to say, that although they may be, in some measure, dilapidated now, yet that they were originally intended to be exposed buildings. They who maintain this opinion are aware that many other structures of analogous forms are imbedded or enveloped in mounds so as to be invisible externally, but they will not allow that the exposed ones ever were so. As long as these authors confine themselves to the bare declaration of their belief, their position is not so assailable ; but when they point to the monuments which they say illustrate their arguments, the case is altered. The examples are open to the inspection and consideration of everybody, and the accuracy of their descriptions can be tested. This has been done, and the result has been that numberless inaccuracies have been detected in the published accounts and in the plans ; and the conclusions which have been deduced from them are, consequently, pronounced in the following pages to be erroneous.

It will be sufficient to point out this in a few of the well-known monuments to which attention has been directed ; and as no author has treated the subject so comprehensively as Mr. Fergusson, or been so methodical in the arrangement and classification of the monuments, his recent work¹ will be particularly referred to in the following remarks. He has admitted that he is indebted for much of his information to the published accounts of others. It must be premised that I do not assert there is positive *proof* of the former existence of the complete mounds, nor do I say that there is any tradition of them, but I say that when the exposed monuments are compared with those which are wholly enveloped, and with those numberless instances in which the traces, in many examples very extensive traces, of the mounds still exist, the fair and legitimate inference is, that these so-called “free-standing”² structures were once monuments of

(1) “Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries, their Ages and Uses.” 1872.

(2) These are defined to be Dolmens which were never intended to be hidden in any earthen covering, and about which no trace of a mound exists.

the same class as the others, and that they are only in a more advanced stage of decay at the present time.

I go a step further, and say that there are so *very few* instances in which no trace whatever of a mound remains, that the argument, from inference, is greatly strengthened. Have the advocates of the theory ever attempted to sum up *carefully* all the examples of *total* denudation? It has been remarked by the author of "Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries," p. 44, that "probably at least one hundred Dolmens in these islands could be enumerated which have not now a trace of any such envelope." There is a confidence in this statement which invites scrutiny, and I venture to say at the outset that it is far from being accurate, for it is well known that traces of mounds which in some instances no longer exist are upon record, and there is no reason for doubting the record. Immediately following the above statement, a well-known monument is brought forward as one of the unmistakeable hundred examples, and the remark is made that Kit's Cotty House, near Aylesford, in Kent, "is exactly now where it was when Stukeley drew it in 1815, and there was no tradition then of any mound ever having covered it," and "we cannot now find a trace of it." But if we pass on to p. 116, where the monument is again mentioned, we find it said, "If we can trust Stukeley's drawing, it was an external Dolmen standing on the end of a low long barrow," "the mound has since been levelled by the plough," and "I am inclined to place faith in the drawing." There is no tradition, it is true, of any mound having *covered* it, but how any faith can be put in the drawing, and yet it can be said that the mound has been levelled, which, it is implied at p. 44, never existed, is beyond comprehension. According to Stukeley, therefore, there was not only a trace of the mound, but its form was in his time determinable, and the stone chamber was situated near one of its extremities. This agrees admirably with the construction of many other chambered long barrows where we see the chamber wholly, or in great part, enveloped. This monument, therefore, should not be included among the obvious hundred examples.

Pentre-Ifan, in Pembrokeshire, is also brought forward by the same author as another remarkable example in support of

the “free-standing” theory. He describes it very briefly and inadequately in pp. 168, 169, and compares it with those which “were, or were intended to be, covered with mounds.” There is, he thinks, a very wide difference between it and them, for the latter, he admits, are enclosed sepulchral chambers, whereas, as regards the former, it never could have been erected to be hid, and “besides that, the supports do not, and could not, form a chamber. The earth would have fallen in on all sides, &c.” Unquestionably there would be much to favour the theory, if it could be granted that the monument is in the same condition now as it always was; but it is known for certain that this is not so. There is, fortunately, a description of it written by Owen more than two hundred years ago; and there is also another account, by Fenton, as it appeared in his day, about seventy or eighty years since, and from these we learn that the aspect of the monument was totally unlike what it is now. There were then eight or nine upright stones under the great roofing stone, now there are only three; then there were the remains round about it of a stone circle fifty feet in diameter, not now existing; and, according to the late Rev. H. Longueville Jones, there were traces, when he saw it, of the original mound. Of the eight or nine upright stones, two, or at most three, supported the cap-stone, which will easily account for the removal of those which gave it no support. So that in this instance, also, here is a monument which should be excluded from the hundred examples.

On a careful inspection of Plas Newydd, another of the hundred, it will be found that there is evidence both of the encircling ring of stones and of a mound.

It would not be necessary to enter into these particulars but for the oft-repeated assertion of Mr. Fergusson, “no trace of the mound can now be found either around the stones or in the neighbourhood,” which is expressed in various ways, and by which he conveys the impression that no mound has ever existed; and for the argument which this belief is made to sustain, an argument which I think strongly militates against the idea that all these monuments were destined for sepulchral purposes.

Before passing on to monuments of other lands, it will be well to point out the error of one who, with every desire to advance

archæological science, has been misled by the classification adopted by Mr. Fergusson. It will not be out of place to do so here, because the views which I have frequently expressed have been assailed¹ by this young Cornish antiquary, who has been carried away by his zeal. In order to give support to the “free-standing” theory, he enters into a description of Lanyon Quoit, a Dolmen standing in the parish of Madron, Cornwall, which, he thinks, fully establishes it, an opinion shared by Mr. Fergusson (p. 163). But Capt. Oliver, R.A.,² has convincingly shown that the monument is not now in the condition in which it used to be ; that it has been rebuilt, and the position of its supporters altered ; that these original supporters were stont slabs (4 feet wide by 1 foot 6 inches thick), and not slim pillars ; that whereas there are now three, there were four upright slabs in the elder Mr. Borlase’s time ; that two more slabs are lying prostrate close to the others, which it is fair to presume were once upright walling stones of the chamber ; and that the monument stands as much *in* as *on* a long mound, which bears every appearance, he adds, of having been a long barrow. It ought, therefore, to be struck off the list also.

Arthur’s Quoit, in Gower, according to Mr. Fergusson, was probably always “free-standing ;” but both Sir Gardner Wilkinson (“Archæologia Cambrensis,” 1870), and the Rev. E. L. Barnwell,³ have expressed the contrary opinion. The former believes it to have been covered with a tumulus, and the latter writes, “there are cartloads of stones still remaining, and so little disturbed in position, that their outline gives that of the once-existing mound.” This monument, therefore, may rightly be excluded from the list.

The elder Borlase describes very accurately all the most remarkable exposed monuments existing in Cornwall in his day, and speaks of the traces of their mounds in every case, *e. g.*, Mulfra Quoit, in the remains of a stone barrow ; Bosporthenis Cromlech, once in a mound of stones and earth ; and Zennor Cromlech, once in a stone barrow.

(1) “Nature,” vol. viii., p. 202.

(2) “Nature,” vol. viii., p. 344.

(3) “Notes on some South Wales Cromlechs,” p. 18.

According to Norden, who described Trevethy Cromlech in 1610, it was "standing on a little hill within a feilde."¹ Lower Lanyon chamber was discovered in 1790, in a bank of earth and stones; and only one upright stone and the fallen cap-stone now remain. Pawton Cromlech is still partly "buried in the tumulus which no doubt formerly covered the whole." ("Nœnia Cornubiae," p. 32). Chywoone, or Chun Cromlech, was in a barrow or cairn, thirty-two feet in diameter (*Ibid.*, pp. 56, 58), and the author of this book says that it so closely resembles a Dolmen at Moytura, Ireland, and another at Halskov, in Scandinavia, that the drawings of one might pass for those of the other two. This is a repetition of Mr. Fergusson's remark²—the monument "at Halskov is so like the Dolmen and Circle represented in woodcut 61, that the one might almost pass for the other."

The "free-standing" theory receives no support whatever from the monuments of the Channel and Scilly Islands, nor yet from those of the Isle of Man, so that the area of the British Isles is circumscribed within which the more than hundred examples are to be found. England, Wales, Scotland,³ and Ireland, contain a large number of rude stone monuments, and the area is sufficiently wide to produce as many as Mr. Fergusson supposes. But it would be a most difficult—I should say a hopeless—task for any one to attempt to enumerate them, and hand in the required tale.

I have examined the group of monuments known as those of Beni-Messous, or El-Kalaa, in Algeria, and planned several of them. They are all of similar construction, and are simple cists, averaging about 7 feet by 2 feet 6 inches (internal dimensions), without galleries. These cists point east and west, with slight variations, and are built with unhewn stones of the locality—tufa and pudding-stone. The mounds, which in a few instances remain intact, are small, and of stone, and the chambers, which are visible, are in various stages of dilapidation and exposure,

(1) For account and drawings see *Nœnia Cornubiae*, by W. Copeland Borlase, pp. 46, 47.

(2) *Op. Cit.*, pp. 304, 305.

(3) At p. 240, Mr. Fergusson says—"The free-standing Dolmens are few and far between, some half dozen for the whole country," which again diminishes the area.

traces of the mounds being clearly indicated by the quantity of loose stones which are around them. The place has served for many years as a convenient quarry for the Trappist monks of Staouli, and for the French colonists who have located themselves at Guyotville and Cheragas. If it had not been for a government order, the whole of these monuments would have been carted away for the sake of their building materials. When first discovered, they are said to have numbered about one hundred; about thirty are now left. They are scattered over an area of a few acres, and are arranged without any regularity; and at the period of their completion must have presented a remarkable collocation of stone heaps. The late M. Berbrugger, who was Inspector General of Historical Monuments in Algeria, was the first to make their existence known, about thirty-seven years ago. Dr. E. Bertherand, the present Secretary of the Algerian Acclimatisation Society, has described them in a pamphlet printed by that Society. In 1859 Mr. A. H. Rhind communicated an article upon them to the Society of Antiquaries, London, which is printed in "Archæologia," vol. xxxviii. M. René Galles,¹ the well-known explorer of Brittany Dohmens, has also written about them; and the late Mr. J. W. Flower, who visited the spot in 1868, has compiled an article from the foregoing pamphlets, which he read at the International Congress of Pre-historic Archæology held at Norwich in the same year. All these writers have classified them as covered and uncovered tombs, implying, if not asserting in so many words, that the latter had never been covered, *i. e.*, "free-standing." Mr. Fergusson has followed their lead, and adopted their classification; but a careful inspection of each exposed monument will convincingly prove that the stone heaps which surround them strongly testify against the theory.

When, however, attention is directed by Mr. Fergusson to continental examples, astonishment at the glaring inaccuracies and contradictory statements is increased, and wonder is excited

(1) Since this gentleman published his account of them, I believe he has changed his views as to their construction. When I returned from Algeria, in 1872, I passed through Nantes, at which time he was President of the Archaeological Society of that City, and in his presence I read a paper on the construction of the Algerian Monuments, at the conclusion of which he made some observations assenting to my views.

that several well-known monuments should have been brought forward to support a theory which their prominent features most clearly refute. There are two in the south of Brittany which have been described by him as belonging to the uncovered class, viz., Dol-ar-Marchand, at Locmariaker, and Courconno, in the parish of Plouharnel. Of the latter he says, "it certainly never was covered up" (p. 343). This is a plain and positive statement; yet a few pages further on (p. 363) he writes doubtfully, if not contradictingly, on this point; it is "a magnificent cist, walled with rude stone, and such as would form a chamber in a tumulus if buried in one, though whether this particular example was ever intended to be so treated or not, is by no means clear." Of the former he writes, it is "the most interesting, if not the finest free-standing Dolmen in France," and "the great stone, like that of most free-standing Dolmens, rests on three points, their architects having early learned how difficult it was to make sure of their resting on more. So that, unless they wanted a wall to keep out the stuff of which the tumulus was to be composed, they generally poised them on three points like that at Castle Wellan."

The question bears quite another aspect, however, when these monuments are carefully inspected, and the treatment they have received at the hands of the inhabitants of late years is inquired into. We thus ascertain that the great Dolmen of Courconno is in a very different state now from what it was in 1847, when drawn and described by Cayot-Délandre, the Historian of the Morbihan, and that it has been further curtailed of its once enormous proportions since 1854. It was then not a mere cist of gigantic size, but a huge chamber, to which a long covered way or passage was attached, the dimensions of which are given; and there were also traces of the enveloping mound, some of which still exist.

So, too, with regard to the great Dolmen of Dol-ar-Marchand; which is not at all as described by Mr. Fergusson. Its chamber has also a long covered way attached to it, which fact he does not mention; both the chamber and the covered way are buried to a depth of several feet in the remains of a circular mound which can be measured; and regular walls fill the interstices of

the sides of the chamber and covered way for the express purpose of keeping out the earth composing the tumulus. All these features are uncontestedly visible. These monuments, therefore, do not sustain the theory.

There are other well-known examples of partially exposed monuments in France, respecting which a great deal might be written to invalidate the “free-standing” theory. The above will be sufficient to show upon what a weak and indefensible basis it rests.

The theory is supposed by its leading advocates to receive the strongest support from a singular monument near Confolens, St. Germain-sur-Vienne, which Mr. Fergusson believes was erected as late as the eleventh or twelfth century of the Christian era. It is considered of such great importance that it has been engraved and stamped in gold upon the cover of the book which has been so often referred to. It will not be right, therefore, to pass it by. The monument is really a remarkable one, and merits a most careful study on the spot. Owing to its situation in a most out-of-the-way part of France, which entails a very fatiguing journey to reach, few archaeologists have had the temerity to undertake the journey; and very few Englishmen have seen it. I was told when there that no tourist had visited the spot for ten years. At a first view it is a very staggering example, but on investigation its simple history unfolds itself in a convincing manner, and quite upsets Mr. Fergusson’s conclusions. It is, in fact, an ancient sepulchre, which has been altered, and converted to another use many centuries later. The covering stone is the only remaining relic of the primitive structure, and there are incised designs upon its under surface which point to its age and use. These designs, to enumerate them briefly, consist of a stone axe in its handle, which has a wrist-loop or guard like those figured in the Morbihan Sculptures, and a second axe without a handle; and the tale they disclose is unmistakeable. Of this structure Mr. Fergusson remarks, “the monument, however, that seems capable of throwing the greatest amount of light on their age, is the Dolmen of St. Germain-sur-Vienne, near Confolens, Poitou.” The capstone rests on four columns, of “Gothic design,” and “their interest arises from the fact

that the style of their ornamentation belongs undoubtedly to the twelfth century, or thereabouts,—certainly not earlier than the eleventh century. In order to explain away so unwelcome an anomaly, it has been suggested that some persons in the twelfth century cut away all the rest of the original rude stones which supported the capstone, and left only the frail shafts which we now see. If this were so it would in no way alter the argument to be derived from it. If men could be found in the twelfth century to take the trouble, and run the enormous risk of such an operation, their respect for the monument must have been quite equal to that implied in its erection" (p. 336). He has made a most important omission in his account of this monument, and has excluded facts from his narrative which are stated in the books¹ from whence he has obtained his knowledge of it. Had he mentioned them, his readers would have been able to judge for themselves whether his argument is sound. The facts are, that a small apsidal chapel (12 metres in length by 5 in width), probably of the same date as the columns which now support the stone, used to enclose the monument; that the walls, of extremely rude masonry, were visible in 1826 up to the ground-level surrounding the monument; that the ground under the cap-stone had been excavated with the design of gaining height for the columns; that four steps led down from the west door to the floor of the chapel; and that the oblong stone represented in the ground plan (p. 337) is the slab of the Christian altar. All these facts tend strongly to establish the conviction that some persons in the twelfth century removed the original rude stones which supported the cap-stone, and inserted the columns one by one in their stead, without disturbing the cap-stone or altering its original elevation above the ground line. No doubt it was a troublesome, but by no means a risky, operation. All the columns vary in dimensions and height to suit the inequalities of the rude cap-stone; their bases *are not on the same level*; and their capitals are not square with each other. All these important facts support the opinion that the ground had not been prepared beforehand, and the columns set up for the purpose of

(1) "Memoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France," vol. vii., pp. 39-43. Paris, 1826.
Michon's "Statistique de la Charente," &c.

carrying a ponderous capstone, weighing about twenty tons, which would have to be lifted and placed upon them. The motive for the conversion of an ancient monument to another use in the twelfth century is not hard to imagine. The edict of Nantes, in the seventh century, points to the superstitious veneration which was paid then by a semi-heathen population to the rude stone monuments of the country; and we may well suppose this feeling to have lingered, in remote places, for several centuries later. Indeed a certain amount of superstitious reverence of the same kind continues to exercise its influence over the Bretons of the present day. Instead, therefore, of destroying all the stones, men have sculptured or erected Christian emblems upon many of them, in order to divert the people's thoughts and raise them to a nobler worship. So in this instance we may conceive that the immense covering-stone of the tomb of a traditional hero has been converted into a rude baldachin over a Christian altar. This supposition accords, at all events, with all the circumstances of this monument, and is more reasonable than that suggested in "*Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries.*" The monument is not "*an unwelcome anomaly;*" nor is it a "*free-standing*" one in the sense implied by the author of that work.

I have dwelt at length upon this monument because of the remark of Mr. Fergusson that it "*seems capable of throwing the greatest amount of light on the age*" of these structures, and of the further remark that some persons would be disposed to "*explain away so unwelcome an anomaly*" by suggesting that it must be an ancient monument which has been re-adapted in the twelfth century. I have shown that when all the facts of the case, which are known and published, are brought forward, there is nothing to prevent the ready adoption of such a suggestion, and nothing in the structure itself to startle us. The only thing that really startles the enquirer is, that much which should have been stated has been omitted by the author of "*Rude Stone Monuments.*" It is greatly to be regretted that the published accounts should have been denuded of such details as would assist the student to obtain a correct impression of so remarkable an erection, and that a very strong doubt should

have been cast upon the only satisfactory explanation which would commend itself to an unbiased observer. Had this been the only instance in this book of the omission of the mention of important features in the description of ancient monuments, his argument in favour of their comparatively recent construction would be less assailable, but when it occurs, as I have shown, in other instances, and shall have occasion to show again, and that the very feature which would have thrown light upon their construction, destination, and age, receives no notice from him, then I cannot refrain from observing that science is simply retarded by a publication which bears upon its face such repeated marks of carelessness and imperfect knowledge. This author, *e. g.*, ought to know that a rude stone chamber, with a passage attached, which is buried in a well-defined circular mound to a depth of three feet, can in no sense come under his definition of a “free-standing” dolmen; yet, in the case of Dol-ar-Marchand, these features are absolutely ignored. There must be a very small acquaintance with the structures of the class under consideration when such points fail to attract the notice of a person who professes to have a knowledge of them.

The “free-standing” theory having been adopted, required further confirmation than the external appearance of the monuments was supposed to give it, and its advocates have considered that it is strengthened by the “impossibility of accounting for the disappearance of the mounds” in many instances, and Mr. Fergusson has followed in the wake of Baron Bonstetten,¹ whose accuracy of observation does not seem to be of a high order, and has adopted his language. The Baron says that both Brittany and the Department of the Lot are “pays à dolmens appartenants par excellence,” by which he means, as he afterwards shows, dolmens which are now as they have been always. This observation proves that he must have given them a very cursory examination. His objection to the tumular belief is thus stated: “Les dolmens se rencontrent le plus souvent dans des landes inéultes et impropre aux défrichements par la nature même du sol. D’ailleurs, dans un but de nivellation on ne se bornerait pas à enlever le tumulus, mais on détruirait encore le dolmen.

(1) “Essai sur les Dolmens.” Geneva, 1865.

Ses pierres seraient utilisées ou on les enfouirait assez profondément en terre pour qu'elles ne heurtent pas le soc de la charrue." (pp. 7, 8). This objection he applies to both the Brittany and the Lot monuments ; but what are the real facts ? Putting aside the undeniable fact that an insignificant number show no trace of the original mound, very many, indeed the larger number of them, are not far from habitations, and although they may stand on uncultivated plots of ground, are surrounded by cultivated lands which are inclosed by loose stone walls. Again, numbers of chambered mounds have been wholly swept away, and the materials utilized within the memory of man. Others have been partially removed, and the stone chambers reduced to ruinous heaps ; and, in some cases, as is well known, deep holes have been dug, and the obstructing blocks buried. And this work of destruction, which is still going on in spite of the prohibitions of the French government, and the legal penalties threatened, has been in operation for centuries. In those examples where the exposed monuments are far from habitations, and on lands which now seem to be incapable of profitable cultivation, is it impossible to imagine a different state of things centuries, or tens of centuries back ? May there not have been an occupation of those sites then, and requirements which induced the people to resort to the mounds for materials ? Besides, is nothing due to the disintegrating effects of the elements upon the mounds ? However, before it can be roundly asserted that exposed monuments, of the nature under discussion, are in situations in which it is *impossible* to account for the disappearance of the mounds, they should be carefully examined to see if any trace of the mounds exists or no ; and I make this remark because of the extraordinary inaccuracy of description and carelessness of observation which have been detected in published works in which these structures are spoken of, and in which the "free-standing" theory is advocated. Ought not a knowledge of the facts which are mentioned above to have been acquired by the authors, and have made them hesitate before attempting to classify monuments according to their present aspects, without carefully taking into account every possible circumstance connected with the past history of the localities in which they are situated ?

Another continental writer¹ has fallen into the like errors through the objectionable practice of following in the track of other authors, and seeing with others' eyes. M. da Costa, following the lead of Baron Bonstetten, has adopted the classification of these monuments into (1) "dolmens apparetos," (2) "dolmens occultos," and (3) "dolmens construidos sobre um monticulo artificial," against which last class I shall raise a vehement protest by and by.

It results from what has been said, that what is really needed, when treating of rude stone monuments is perfect accuracy of description, and no omission of any detail or feature which may reasonably be supposed to be connected with the structures. Important omissions of this nature frequently occur, not intentionally, but because of the defective archaeological education of the writers, and their want of experience. It is very damaging to the cause of scientific truth when such a theory as the one here exposed is asserted to be supported by examples which really tell against it. Our antiquarian ancestors, who knew very little respecting these monuments, and had few opportunities of comparing them with others in distant localities, who did not know what their true construction and destination were, and mistook the weathering effects on the cap-stones for channels artificially made, called these structures Druids' altars, and invented horrible stories of human sacrifices. Assuredly, if it be once admitted that there were "free-standing" monuments, which were never inclosed in mounds, then their views may not have been so very far wrong, and some of these buildings may, after all, have been erected for altars of sacrifice. There would be very little proof that they were intended for burial-places. The difference between them (especially those which one author describes as resembling "three-legged milking stools," and another calls "tripod dolmens"), and the carefully covered ones, out of whose vaults the earth of the mounds is thoroughly excluded by means of walls of dry masonry, is so great and so striking, that the exposed ones could scarcely be, with any certainty, declared to have been tombs. There is abundant evidence betokening what the covered ones were destined for, and hardly more than a mere assumption as regards the others.

(1) "Descripcao de alguns Dolmens ou Antas de Portugal," por F. A. Pereira da Costa. Lisboa, 1868.

ARTICLE II.

IN the preceding article one fundamental error respecting the construction of these monuments is exposed and refuted by an examination of those specified examples which the advocates of the “free-standing” theory claim in support of their view.

It is now my intention to examine another view of their construction, for which there is even less evidence,—an erroneous view which originated with French authors, and has been adopted by some leading English and other antiquaries without a suspicion of its fallacy.

The French have given the name of “demi-dolmen,” and the late Mr. du Noyer, of Ireland, “primary,” or “earth-fast cromleacs,” to a class of monuments, which, notwithstanding their assertions to the contrary, I shall show are only dilapidated chambers, once enclosed in mounds. The refutation of these two errors, and of a third to which attention will be directed in the next article, is essentially necessary in the present day, because conclusions of a startling character have been based upon them, and an attempt has been made by the author of “Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries” to prove that the period to which these monuments chiefly belong is comparatively recent, and that they were erected in historic times.

It can be only by a careful sifting of the evidence from which these conclusions have been derived that their seeming solidity can be proved to be absolute weakness, and indeed thoroughly unsubstantial and fallacious. Conclusions, to carry any weight, should be based upon facts, and not upon things which are first *assumed* and then *asserted* in the most positive language to be facts. I have shown, in the first article, how this bad habit, in some authors, has been the means of misleading others, and it will now be shown that another ideal class of monuments has been invented, and declared with authoritative

voice to be genuine articles, and unfortunately pretty generally accepted.

These monuments are defined by Mr. du Noyer to be those which have "one end of the cap-stone always resting on the ground, the other being supported by a pillar or block."¹ He has adopted the name "primary," not, as he says, "in a *chronological* sense, but on the theory of progressive structural development, which naturally suggests that the more simple the structure or form, the more remote its age." At page 44 he says: "If we had but one example of what I call a 'primary,' or earth-fast, cromleac, it would be hazardous to form a theory from it; but when we have numerous objects of this class, it requires but a little consideration and exercise of reasonable imagination to perceive that we are dealing with a class of objects in themselves perfect. I *confidently assert* that in the examples of them which I now illustrate, there is not the least evidence for the supposition that *any of them*² had been originally constructed after the fashion of what we may call the normal cromleac; on the contrary, it is very evident they are now as perfect as they were ever intended to be." Then, after mentioning the monument of Bonnington Mains, Mid Lothian, he says: "This structure was never different in form to what it is at present, and is not a ruined cromleac, as has been supposed." Now when it is borne in mind that demi-dolmens are monuments of French origin, and that if English minds had not been prompted to receive the idea, they would not have distinguished them from dilapidated chambers, it is surprising that we should have such emphatic language. They who write so positively can have had few opportunities of comparing the monuments of one country with those of another, or must be incapable of appreciating their analogous features. The advocates of this theory seem to have examined very cursorily the monuments of their own localities or countries, and then given the rein to their imaginations. The early French writers upon their own antiquities have been the first to do so, and have invented the "demi-dolmen" class. Our own antiquaries have borrowed the idea from them and

(1) Kilkeeny Archaeol. Soc. Journal, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 40, *et seq.*

(2) These *italics* are mine.

accepted it as true, and either employed the same designation or changed it to "primary" and "earth-fast" dolmens.

It is curious to observe that the advocates of this theory have omitted to mention any trace of a *mound* in every case. This feature is never alluded to, and seems to have escaped their notice altogether, or to have never entered into their thoughts. Yet, as "demi-dolmens" had their origin on the continent, it is a fact, for which I can vouch, that the traces, and very considerable ones too, in many instances, of the once-enveloping mound exist; and this is one of the many strong tokens of the fallacy of the theory. For as these traces suggest the previous existence of the complete mound, it is an undeniable fact that no demi-dolmen has ever been found in a barrow which is excavated for the first time. I shall, however, show presently that France does not produce any such distinct class of monuments at all, although Mr. Fergusson (p. 344) says that it is "a form of dolmen very common" in that country, he having been misled by French writers. He says, moreover, "those in Ireland and Wales seem all really to be only demi-dolmens and I look upon them as probably a very modern form of this class of monuments." A critical examination of some of the Irish examples enumerated by Mr. du Noyer will show what I mean by saying that every circumstance should be taken into account before men venture to classify monuments according to their present aspects.

The first, at Kells, co. Meath, bears no resemblance whatever to an ancient monument, and I very much doubt if it ever was one. It is a large block of stone, which rests at one end upon a small and loose surface stone. It was found about a hundred and twenty years ago when the approach to the Marquis of Headfort's mansion was made, and the ground was levelled which concealed it. Other blocks of stone were found, and it is very likely that all were placed, as they are now seen, by the workmen. When the period and the circumstances of the discovery are considered, it is strange that these stones should have been made, one hundred and twenty years afterwards, into an ancient monument, and placed on a specific class-list. When Mr. du Noyer first saw it, he was so greatly struck with its anomalous

character, that he described it as “an unfinished and abandoned cromleae.” On further consideration he was convinced that it was “a most interesting example of a hitherto unrecognized class of such remains ;” and he therefore placed it at the head of his illustrations of “earth-fast” cromleaes. There is no account of any bones, or reliques of any kind, having been found about or near the stones. If, however, we suppose it to have been a sepulchre, and the bones to have entirely perished, the very fact of its having been concealed in earth, strongly militates against the demi-dolmen, or “earth-fast” theory.

Another of this presumed class, at Mount Venus, co. Dublin, is described as “a genuine primary cromleae, and as fine an example of its type as we possess in Ireland.” Any one looking at the drawing given by Mr. du Noyer will see stones resembling supports lying about, and suggesting at once that this is a dilapidated chamber of the normal type. One of these appears to be fixed in an upright position, and to have formed one of the walling stones of the chamber.

Both this author and Mr. E. A. Conwell have described¹ a monument near Rathkenny House, co. Meath, on which there are inscriptions and curious markings. It consists of a large slab, 10 feet 10 inches by 8 feet 6 inches, and 3 feet thick, which has one edge on the ground, and the opposite edge resting against an upright stone. These gentlemen consider that it may be a monument which is perfect as it now stands, and a type not hitherto noticed or described. The field bears the name of “the little cairn of hazel,” of “the little cairn of Finn Mae Cumhaill,” a name originally applied to the structure itself. Does not the name indicate that it was once a chamber in a cairn ? And is it not a just inference that it is a dilapidated monument, more particularly when we are informed that the destroying hand had been at work, that another monument (not described) in an adjoining field has been destroyed, and that this one which remains had been doomed to share the same fate ?

There was formerly at Ballylowra a structure, described² by the Rev. J. Graves, about which Mr. du Noyer had some doubt.

(1) Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. ix., p. 541.

(2) Kilkenny Archaeol. Soc. Journ., 1st series, vol. i., p. 130.

“That this was ever a true cromleac of the normal type,” he writes, “is by no means certain, though it is not impossible that such might have been the fact;” and yet he says that “it must be classed amongst our earth-fast cromleacs.” This, I venture to think, is not a very satisfactory way of accumulating instances, for there is first a doubt as to its true construction, and then soon afterwards an assertion as to the class to which it must belong. One thought forces itself upon the mind with reference to these examples, viz., that in the localities where the occupiers of the soil have, for years, carried on a work of destruction, and circumstances alone have arrested their hands, it is not safe to put any trust in the present aspect of the remaining monuments, and very far from safe to conclude that they are ancient typical forms. These Irish structures do not therefore support the demi-dolmen or “earth-fast” theory.

Not one example of this class has been met with in Portugal, nor does it appear to exist in Denmark, England, Scotland, the Channel and Scilly Islands, and the Isle of Man. According to the Rev. E. L. Barnwell, who is a very accurate observer, it is not found in Wales; and he informs us that the half-ruined chamber on St. David’s Head, which is “a fair example of what some would call a variety of cromlech,” exhibits the usual characteristic features of the normal type, and abundant evidence of the chamber and mound. We have therefore only the territory of France whereon to search for it, and it will be a considerable gain to science to show that there, also, there is no foundation for the “demi-dolmen” theory.

The extreme variety and contrariety of definitions given of this supposed class, both by early and recent writers, is in itself sufficient to create a disbelief in its existence, even if there were no positive evidence to disprove it. Mahé defined¹ it to be a slab resting one end on *two* pillars, like a dolmen, and the other end on the earth; destination unknown. De Freminville described² a monument at St. Yvi, Finistère, which he called “un dolmen incliné,” the best preserved of the structures of that Department. His belief was that dolmens were altars of sacrifice, and

(1) *Antiquités du Morbihan.*

(2) *Antiquités de la Bretagne.*

that the “dolmen incliné” was only another and less common form. Cayot-Délandre’s definition is “a monument of the same nature as the dolmen, but composed of *two stones only*, one vertical, the other having one end resting upon the former, and the opposite end on the ground.” The dolmen he considers to be an altar, but he assigns no destination to the demi-dolmen. Mr. du Noyer’s definition agrees with this last. When the descriptions of the examples are compared with the monuments themselves, it is easy to perceive how little they agree with the definitions; for instead of the inclined slab resting one of its ends *upon* the vertical pillar, it only rests *against* it in some instances, and in others it rests upon or against two or more pillars instead of one; and, besides, no mention is made, as I have said above, of the remains of the *mound*, which is so characteristic a feature of nearly all these dilapidated structures, and of the *gallery* or *covered passage* which is frequently found in connection with them. These two features, which should not be overlooked, are sufficient in themselves to upset the theory altogether. The mound tells against the *exposed* and the *altar* notions; and the covered passage implies both the once-existing mound, and the uses for which these monuments were erected.

I am of opinion that some French writers employ the term demi-dolmen without meaning to specify a distinct type, but because they know that their readers will understand that they merely speak of a tilted cap-stone, *e. g.*, M. Brouillet, described¹ a monument at La Plaine, near Artron, and calls it both a dolmen and a demi-dolmen. It is a dolmen, he writes, because it is composed of three upright stones (forming three sides of a chamber) under a cap-stone, which are partly enveloped in a tumulus; and it is a demi-dolmen because the western support only bears up one end of the cap-stone which dips rapidly eastwards, and rests its opposite end on the earth which forms the remaining portion of the mound.

Cayot-Délandre (p. 175) mentions a demi-dolmen, south of Crach, of which he says the table-stone is supported by one pillar, and a eromlech (stone circle) composed of ten stones touches it on the west side. It is, in reality, a dilapidated circular

(1) *Epoques ante-historiques du Poitou*, p. 97.

chamber at Kerzue, of which I have made a plan, which was originally roofed with over-lapping stones, forming a beehive vault, and approached by a passage on its south-south-east side. The so-called demi-dolmen is merely one of the large vaulting slabs which has been shifted to one side, and the whole is partially enclosed in the remains of a round barrow. When I was there it had recently been excavated by the proprietor, and its true form was made evident. Another ruined monument, of the same form, in a field called Parc-lan, close by, is also designated by the same author a demi-dolmen.

Mahé speaks of two of these monuments as being near the chapel of St. Sauveur, to the east of Erdeven,—“deux barrows done l'un peut avoir six, et l'autre sept pieds de hauteur. Chacun de ces monticules porte un demi-dolmen, &c.” I explored both of them in the year 1866, and discovered that they were originally true sepulchral chambers, with galleries or passages, of the normal type. Since Mahé wrote, the mound of one has been almost entirely carted away; and it is hardly needful for me to add that, in both instances, the chambers were found to be erected on the ground-level.

If the number of French rude stone monuments, of the class considered in these pages, which have been mentioned by historians and others, be summed up, and the demi-dolmens noted, let us see what is the result. Mahé enumerates ninety-five in the Department of the Morbihan, and of this number seven are distinguished by this appellation. But five are indisputably ruined Dolmens, and the remaining two he never saw; he was merely informed that they existed in the island of Groix. The “demi-dolmen from Mahé” (Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries, p. 345), is not included in this number, because it is no monument of this class, according to Mahé himself, who speaks of two curious structures, alike to each other in some respects, one only of which he professed to have seen, and of the other he had been told. He was a bad draughtsman, and appears to have made a sketch (Antiquités du Morbihan, plate 1, fig. 3), from memory of the one he saw at Angan (p. 152), Ploermel, of which, however, he gives no detailed description, so that it is impossible to say how far the drawing tallies with it.

The other monument (p. 124), of which he was informed, is said to be at Plencadeuc, and he remarks that it is of so peculiar a character that it merits a special designation “*Tout fait croire*,” he adds, “*que c'est un tombeau* ;” and this is said by a firm believer in the demi-dolmen class, of which he had written previously, “*leur destination est inconnue*.” Mr. Fergusson has been misled by an author¹ who professes to have reproduced Mahé’s drawing, which, it must be regretted, has been put on the pages of “*Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries*.” In the next page Mr. Fergusson gives two other monuments of the supposed class—one near Poitiers, and another at Kerland, near Carnac. Of the former, Mr. E. Breton observes: “it frequently happens that real dolmens, from being partially destroyed, present the appearance of inclined dolmens,” agreeing with Mr. Prosper Merimée, who describes² it as a ruined dolmen; and yet it is here given as a typical specimen, the remark being made that “generally speaking” demi-dolmens “are more like the one near Poitiers, where the stone either rests, at one end, on a bank, or on a flat space sloping upwards” (p. 345).

The other structure, at Kerland, is likewise copied from Gailhabaud’s work, and the drawing is as bad a representation of the actual thing as can possibly be, and has misled Mr. Fergusson, who writes, “in spite of the shock such an idea will give to most people, I cannot help thinking it is, and always was, a Christian monument. At least, it is inconceivable to me from what motive any Christian could have erected a cross on a pagan monument of this class, if it really were one.” This idea is as fanciful as the demi-dolmen theory itself. Upon the cap-stone a stone cross has been erected in modern times, and this seems to have suggested the idea which is here expressed. It would no doubt greatly strengthen the argument of his book if he could show that a single example of such monuments had been erected in Christian times. He has, however, signally failed in the instance near Confolens, and the failure is quite as complete here. When this monument was in a more perfect condition

(1) *Ancient and Modern Architecture*, by Jules Gailhabaud. Mr. E. Breton, Member of the Soc. of Antiq. of France, is answerable for the notices of Celtic monuments in this work.

(2) *Notes d'un voyage dans l'ouest de la France*, p. 368.

than it now is (if it yet exist, which is doubtful), its original plan was quite patent. In 1854, when I planned it for the first time, a part of the passage which led to it existed ; and the cap-stone itself was not so inclined as it became later, when a quarry was opened at its foot. The stone which is represented in the woodcut (on title page, and in p. 346), as standing between it and the church of Carnac, is in fact close, and at right angles, to the support, and is one of the walling slabs of the chamber ; and the cross, which is drawn as if it were erected upright upon the inclined stone, leans considerably eastwards, having gradually gone in the same direction with the falling stone. The two illustrations do not, therefore, sustain the theory at all.

Again, Cayot-Délandre, who wrote from personal knowledge, mentions one hundred and forty-seven monuments in the Morbihan, and only four are called demi-dolmens ; but of these I have positive proofs that two are ruined dolmens, and of the remaining two he gives no descriptions. He also says that Mahé was mistaken in supposing that three monuments on Mané-er-Kloh, Locoal-Mendon, were demi-dolmens.

De Freminville mentions only one “dolmen incliné” in Finistère, of which I have spoken above ; and none in Côtes-du-Nord.

If we go south it is just the same story. Mr. Brouillet enumerates eleven monuments, two of which he calls demi-dolmens, but it is very evident, from his descriptions, that they are ruined dolmens which were formerly enclosed in mounds. There are twenty-four dolmens in the department of the Cantal, and no demi-dolmen. Where, then, are the numerous examples of this class to be found in France ? I have shown that not a single example exists either north or south, notwithstanding the statement that “it is a form of dolmen very common” in that country. I have shown, also, that those which have been asserted to be typical examples in Ireland, upon examination do not support the theory. Wales, on the authority of an acute observer, fails to produce one ; and, so far as I know, do England and Scotland, and Seandinavia. It is therefore a gain to science to have got rid of an ideal class.

ARTICLE III.

THE third fundamental error which I would refute is that which concerns the formation of another ideal class in which the mound is not ignored ; but in this case, instead of the chamber having been once concealed within it, it is supposed to have been always visible, and erected on the top of the mound. Mr. Fergusson writes (p. 46) : “In Ireland, in Denmark, and more especially in France, we have numerous examples of dolmens on the top of tumuli, where it is impossible they should ever have been covered with earth.” Again (p. 335) : “This form, so far as I know, never occurs in Brittany, while on the other hand it is common in the south of France. If they are of the same age as similar monuments in Scandinavia and in Ireland, they must be of a comparatively modern date.” The inaccurate descriptions of various authors, and their cursory acquaintance with chambered barrows, have originated this idea, and these writers must bear the chief blame ; the monuments themselves are perfectly innocent. Let these descriptions be critically examined and compared with the specified examples, and the fallacy will be apparent.

Mr. Fergusson is not aware, it seems, that it has been said of some Brittany monuments, “Je ne puis croire que des mausolées comme ceux de Kerbistoret en Plæmeur, de Runédaol en Belle Isle, et du milieu des Alignments d’Erdeven, qui sont placés *sur des tumulus* fussent eux-mêmes surmontés de tumulus.”¹ This was thought to be a convincing reply to M. Louis Galles, of Vannes, who holds that all now exposed dolmens were once concealed in mounds. I have examined and planned his first and last named instances, and they are most assuredly dolmens erected upon the ground-level, and are still partially enclosed in

(1) Des monuments celtiques, &c., dans le Morbihan, by Dr. A. Fouquet, p. 8. Article addressed to the members of the Archaeological Section of the Breton Congress at Vannes, in 1853.

their mounds. The second-named example no longer exists, and, I believe, had been wholly demolished many years before Dr. Fouquet wrote. Cayot-Délandre (p. 369) describes a dolmen, “placé sur une petite butte artificielle de 1 mètre de hauteur ; dont le sommet aujourd’hui atteint presque la partie inférieure de la table.” The expression “sur une butte artificielle” is simply the author’s inexact language, and is not meant to imply that the chamber was erected above the ground-level. The present elevation of the mound clearly denotes this. He likewise describes the monuments alluded to by Dr. Fouquet in the extract given above, at Kerbistoret, and makes some strange blunders respecting its construction. His inexactness is further exemplified by his account of the Erdeven stone avenues, which, he says, at the middle of their course skirt the base of an artificial mound of eight or ten metres in height, on the summit of which are the ruins of two dolmens ; the fact being that this is a large natural hill, on which are many other monuments besides those he has mentioned.

As was to be expected, Baron Bonstetten is a believer in this class, and uses the expression “dolmen construit sur un tumulus” (p. 21), but specifies no French example.

M. Brouillet, speaking of two monuments near Artron, says : “Chacun de ces dolmens semble s’éléver sur une espèce de motte formée par des pierres et de la terre amoncelées en rond autour de leurs supports. L’élévation réelle au dessus du niveau du champ peut donc être de 1 mètre 80 centimètres à deux mètres” (p. 100). Here, also, it is clear that the chambers are erected on the ground-level, and that they only *seemed* to be raised upon the mounds.

The habit of describing monuments without exactness affects other continental writers. Even so distinguished an antiquary as M. Worsaae¹ has given way to it, so that he has been the means of misleading others. Any one who is at all acquainted with the true construction of chambered barrows would perceive at once that the expression was a mere *lapsus linguae*, and not meant to describe a departure from the normal type. Nevertheless, it has been sufficient to give support to a preconceived idea ;

(1) *Primeval Antiquities of Denmark* (English edition) p. 78.

e. g., he writes : “The important and highly ancient memorials which are usually termed cromlechs in England, Steingräber in Germany, and often Urgräber (ancient graves), or Hunengräber (giants’ graves), are slightly elevated mounds, surrounded by a number of upright stones, on the top of which are erected chambers formed of large stones placed one above another.” “They still exist in Denmark in very considerable numbers.” Again : “The stone chambers, erected on the summit of these mounds of earth, are formed, &c.” As the mounds are stated to be of slight elevation, there can be no doubt whatever that the chambers are erected upon the ground-level. This is made clear at p. 80, “the usual height of the supporting stones is from 6 to 8 feet;” and at p. 81, “a great number of these chambers have been opened and explored, &c. They are therefore frequently found quite exposed, although originally they were no doubt covered with earth, yet only in such manner as to leave a portion of the stones which formed the roof visible.” What he wishes to imply is that, owing to explorations conducted by treasure-seekers, and to other influences, many of these once-concealed or in great measure hidden chambers have been exposed, and have received the appellation in England of Cromlechs, and in Scandinavia of Urgräber, Hunengräber, &c. They still have about them the remains of the mound, with its circle of upright stones, above which they are seen.

Mr. Fergusson regrets (p. 276) that Sjöborg’s book appeared “before drawing and engraving had reached the precision and clearness which now characterise them. In consequence of the last defect, we cannot always feel sure of our ground in basing an argument on his drawings.” His drawings are, indeed, very bad, and yet we are able to extract this truth from them, that this “external-dolmen-on-the-top-of-a-mound” theory receives no sanction from them, notwithstanding Mr. Fergusson’s belief to the contrary, who reasons hard to prove that a chambered mound at Lethra (p. 282) was the tomb of King Hildebrand, and introduces Sjöborg’s sketch. If measurements and sections of this barrow and its chamber were given, it would plainly appear that the chamber was erected on the ground level; and Mr. Fergusson then adds that there is an analogous monument

in Wiltshire with which he compares it. "Both are chambered long barrows, both have external dolmens on their summits, and both contain flint implements." As I was present when the late Dr. Thurnam explored this latter monument,¹ I can positively assert that the chamber is erected upon the ground-level, and that it has a covered passage or gallery leading to it, which the Lethra tomb does not appear to possess. Dr. Thurnam is not responsible for the grave error which places the West Kennet chamber on the summit of the barrow. The mound, which is still of considerable dimensions, encloses the chamber and its passage to a level with the covering stones, and there is every reason for believing that, originally, it enveloped it and concealed it altogether.

I have shown above that there are no examples of this ideal class in Brittany and Poitou, and shall now prove that there are none in the south of France. Mr. Fergusson, in pursuing his "free-standing" theory, introduces his readers to the "dolmen de Bousquet," in Aveyron, which he thinks adds strength to his argument. "The question, fortunately, hardly requires to be argued, inasmuch as in Ireland, in Denmark, and more especially in France, we have numerous examples of dolmens on the top of tumuli, &c." (p. 46). The specified example, of which he reproduces M. de Cartailhac's drawing, shows a chamber on the top of a mound of considerable elevation, with steep sides. It is a most incorrect representation. The tumulus is only forty feet in diameter, and from four to five feet in elevation, so that the supports of the covering stone are resting on the ground-level, as is the case with all the monuments I have seen scattered over the great calcareous Plain of which Sauclières (where this dolmen is) forms the eastern part. Mr. Fergusson has consequently been misled by an inaccurate drawing, as well as by an inaccurate account of it. Many of the monuments of this Plain have been explored by the Abbés Cérés and Marcorelles, of Rodez, and they have expressly stated to me, both personally and by letter, that they know no such monument in the Department as a dolmen erected on the top of a tumulus. Both these priests are well-known antiquarians and zealous barrow-diggers, and it was

(1) *Vid. Archaeologia*, vol. xlvi.

the latter who first explored, in a partial manner however, the Bousquet dolmen in 1862. Its examination was continued, ten years later, by M. de Cartailhac. As the bones of adults and of a child were found within the chamber, Mr. Fergusson's idea of a simulated tomb is disposed of.

Mr. W. Copeland Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiæ*, p. 15) has gone to the same inaccurate sources for his knowledge of these structures, and repeats what they have said, viz., that the monuments of the third class are similar in structure to covered ones, but were raised *over* the interment. "They were merely cenotaphs, &c. . . . Craig Madden, in Stirlingshire, and many of the rude Irish cromlechs, are instances of this class, as well as the more prominent examples in Denmark, and at Norway, and at Sauclières, in France, where the Kists actually occur on the summits of the tumuli. No instances are extant in Cornwall." As Mr. Fergusson has been misled, so has Mr. Borlase, by the inaccuracies of continental writers.

M. da Costa, adopting Baron Bonstetten's classification, accepts also the class which he says are commonly called *mamunhas* in Portugal, where the chambers are built upon an artificial mound, and are thus distinguished from *antas* or uncovered dolmens erected on the ground-level. The two examples he names, however, were communicated to him by M. Sehiappa, so that he does not write about them from personal knowledge.

It has been stated (*Rude Stone Monuments*, pp. 400, 401) that the class "with the external dolmen on the summit seems to be very extensive in Algeria, indeed almost typical." "It is almost identical with those of Aveyron, or with Scandinavian examples." On p. 400 is given a "Plan and Elevation of African Tumulus. From Féraud;" but the author confesses to having taken "liberties with M. Féraud's cuts" so as to bring this plan and elevation "a little more into harmony." As I have shown that the supposed class does not exist in the Aveyron and in Scandinavia, it is not necessary to make many remarks upon a monument which has been so treated. Suffice it to say that in Algiers I was assured by Dr. E. Bertherand that the construction of the chambered mounds of the larger groups of Constantine agrees precisely with that of the El-Kalaa group;

and I can easily comprehend that an inaccurate observer and poor draughtsman might give a totally different complexion to the monuments before him. To inexperienced eyes the El-Kalaa group will present examples of the three condemned ideal classes. These monuments are all erected upon the ground-level ; there is not one which stands upon the summit of the mound, and many of them have been excavated by Dr. Bertherand and his friends, who found human remains in them.

The Rev. E. L. Barnwell has also been misled by the French, Danish, and other writers, and therefore writes, "it cannot be denied that there is a variety of dolmen which, at first sight, may appear to present a difficulty," and he then refers to Mr. Fergusson's book, in which the Bousquet monument is spoken of. "They have a very suspicious similarity to an Algerian type," and are "by no means confined to the south of France, for they are also found in Norway and in the Scilly Isles, if Borlase's representation of a stone cairn with a kist on the summit be correct."

I venture to say that, in the foregoing articles, none of my criticisms of the examples of the three ideal classes have been strained. The greater number I have personally examined and planned, and I am therefore able to speak of them with confidence. If I have made any error in what I have said, and in the descriptions I have given, I shall be very thankful to have it exposed and corrected. It is not my desire to maintain doggedly a false position. But I say, and wish to say as forcibly as I can, that the most extraordinary mistakes in description have been published, the most inexplicable errors have been held to be absolute truths, and the most plausible conclusions have been adopted. The heading of these articles expresses my decided conviction that the rude stone monuments of which I have been speaking belong to one class only, viz., that of chambered barrows ;—that is to say, that exposed dolmens are merely the kernels of dilapidated chambered barrows ; that demi-dolmens are simply greatly dilapidated exposed dolmens ; and that external dolmens erected upon the summits of tumuli have no existence at all in Europe and in northern Africa. I have shown that exposed dolmens, in the strictest sense, can be said scarcely to exist as

compared with the number of partially exposed ones, where distinct traces of the once-enveloping mound remain; and have proved my propositions by a critical analysis of the statements of authors, and a careful comparison of them with the monuments they have particularized in the British Isles, France, Scandinavia, Portugal, and Algeria. I have shown how the errors have been originated, and what has conduced to perpetuate them. Would that my remarks might induce young archaeologists to study these very interesting and instructive monuments in a truly scientific and methodical manner, and not put any faith in already published accounts. I do not even ask them to believe implicitly my own statements. What I heartily desire is that these statements may be tested by a close and unbiassed inspection of the specified examples. Sooner or later, I feel assured, my views will be confirmed and established.

Where is there, then, any foundation for the notion that these monuments chiefly belong to the historic period, and that they continued to be erected during the Christian era, until the practice ceased with that unique re-erected anomaly near Confolens? There is none whatever; and they who persevere in maintaining it exhibit a remarkable incompetency to elucidate the subject of rude stone monuments, and an "unwillingness to face evidence contradictory of a pleasant theory." All sound evidence contradicts the notion, because it points directly and unmistakeably to one normal type, *i. e.*, to the covered dolmen, or chambered barrow. The chamber varies almost indefinitely in plan, although there exist a few persistent forms which may be met with in all parts of the world. Other forms there are which are apparently local, and are due to the circumstances and needs of the Prehistoric builders.

CONCLUSION.

A FEW remarks must be added to the foregoing articles. Antiquaries are now agreed that Cromlechs or Dolmens are indisputably sepulchral chambers, and not altars for sacrificing living men; and that the mounds which once concealed them, many of which still enclose precisely analogous chambers, are strictly sepulchral mounds. Ancient and modern tradition in all countries, when referring to them, applies the titles "graves," "ancient graves," "Steingräber," "Hunengräber," "Bé," "Tombeaux," &c., to these structures, so that no great argument in support of any theory can be properly employed in which this most important fact is not recognized. The contents of the chambers of European barrows, when they have been explored for the first time, and I allude to those which were not known to exist before the exploration of their mounds commenced, have invariably pointed to a stone age. In some cases these chambers are mere cists; in others they are provided with passages; in both cases the evidence afforded by their contents is wholly in favour of their having been erected before metal was in use. In no instance has a trace of metal, in the previously unknown and undisturbed chambers, been detected. In some chambered barrows it is nevertheless true that metal has been discovered. I have myself found it, both in the Channel Islands and in Brittany. And yet I say, unhesitatingly, that the chambers in which this occurred belong most assuredly to the stone age, and the presence of metal in them may be very easily accounted for. Their passages were for many ages open, and invited persons to enter; and it is not unlikely that Romans entered, and, it may be, plundered them. I have, on several occasions, found fragments of large Amphoræ, and Samian bowls, and also coins, in addition to reliques of pre-Roman date.

The presence of these Roman objects no more proves that the chambers containing them are not of higher antiquity, than the discovery of a Georgian two-pronged fork on a tessellated pavement would imply that the Villa is not Roman, and cannot possibly be older than the reign of George II.

The rude sculptures on the Brittany monuments frequently exhibit the stone axe, sometimes in its handle and sometimes without, and never any metal weapon.

I make these observations because the object of some writers in the present day is to endeavour to show, by a certain process of reasoning, that these rude stone chambers, whether concealed in mounds or not, do not belong to a pre-historic age. One author, in particular, first casts a doubt upon the three recognized periods of stone, bronze, and iron, and then strives to prove that the rude structures were “generally erected by partially civilized races after they had come in contact with the Romans, and that most of them may be considered as belonging to the first ten centuries of the Christian era.” (Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries, p. 27. Introductory). The argument is that “if some can be proved to belong to the tenth century, it is only a question how far you can, by extenuating the thread, extend it backwards. It can hardly be much beyond the Christian era.” The proof, however, is still wanting; not a single example has been unmistakeably shown to belong to Christian times. I have exposed the baseless supposition that the monument near Confolens belongs, in its origin, to the tenth or twelfth century, and consequently that it in no way supports his argument. I have shown that “tripod” dolmens have no existence as a distinct and, as he supposes, modern class of monument. I have shown that so-called demi-dolmens are simply the ruins of chambers which were once enclosed; and that “dolmen-crowned tumuli” are a fanciful conceit, and that their analogy with Buddhist stupas or false tombs is simply beside the question.

It may be said “The evidence of these structures is not so favourable as we thought to the argument of their historic age, but there is documentary evidence which it is not so easy to refute. Irish annals throw very great light, not only on their uses, but on their period of erection in the Emerald Isle.” A

few words, therefore, on this point. First of all these annals are very legendary, and their chronology is admitted by those who put faith in them to be hopelessly wide of the mark. In the next place they do not help to clear up the difficulty relating to the age of the more important Irish monuments when tested by unbiased reasoners. *E. g.*, let us examine that portion of the Annals which Mr. Fergusson considers to add considerable weight in support of his argument. It narrates the battle of southern Moytura, the story of which may or may not be a fable. One incident in the battle "is worth relating," this author (p. 178) remarks, adopting Sir W. Wilde's conclusions, "as illustrating the manner in which the monuments corroborate the history." It was a four days' fight. On the second day King Eoehy retired to a well to refresh himself with a bath, when he was attacked by three of his enemies, and rescued by his faithful servant, who shortly after died of his wounds, and was interred with all honours in a cairn close by. It appears that a cairn exists here—not, by the way, the only cairn nor the only class of monument on the supposed battle field—and bears the name of the "Cairn of the one man." Sir W. Wilde, of the Royal Irish Academy, explored this tumulus, and within a chamber found an urn. This discovery is considered by Mr. Fergusson to be very satisfactory, and "a greater piece of luck than could reasonably be expected." We are not informed that any mortal remains were found, so that we are left to conjecture that a *man* and not a woman was interred here, and that *one* urn predicates the interment of only one individual in that chamber. The urn, of which he gives a cut (p. 179), is clearly a *food vessel*, and not a cinerary urn, and might just as well have been the property of a woman or a child as of a man. The discovery is, however, considered both by Sir W. Wilde and Mr. Fergusson to be confirmatory of the truth of the story of the royal servant's death, and burial in that cairn, and to strengthen the supposition that all the other monuments of that locality are the burial places of those who fell in that hard-fought battle. They pass by, as of no value, another and, as I believe, much more likely view of these monuments, viz., that they belonged to families peacefully residing for generations on that spot, and interring their dead after

the manner of their fathers ; and they must therefore assume that all who were buried here were the slain warriors only, and that there are no remains in them of women and children. Until this objection to their suppositions and conclusions has been satisfactorily cleared up, it is quite idle to bring forward the Irish Annals and the discovery of one urn in support of the modern date of the Southern Moytura structures. The same may be said of the monuments of Northern Moytura.

These few observations are made for the purpose of warning archaeological students against the very unsatisfactory and misleading argument of the work which has been so frequently alluded to and quoted in the preceding pages,—an argument which, I have shown, is based upon an unsound view of the construction of a certain class of rude stone monuments. The remainder of that work is occupied with an attempt to show that the argument is also sustained by reference to another class of monument, *i. e.*, by upright stones or pillars, whether erected singly or grouped in circles or lines. It will not be more difficult to point out the erroneous conclusions which have been drawn from these ; and I purpose doing so in a second Pamphlet.





